

THE BLIND BEGGAR OF THE TEMPLE, AND HIS WONDERFUL CURE NO. 1977

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 14, 1887,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When He had thus spoken, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the Pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.”
John 9:5-7.*

OUR Savior had been dealing with the Jews and the Pharisees, who had bitterly opposed, and even taken up stones to cast at Him. He felt much more at home when He could fix His eyes upon poor necessitous beings, and bless them with healing and salvation. It is the lot of some of us to be often in controversy with the carnal professors of the present day, and it is a great relief to us to get away from them and their stones, and find out individual sinners, and preach to them in the name of God the gospel, which spiritually opens the eyes of the blind.

At the gate of the Temple sat a blind beggar, who must have been a notable character, for he was possessed of remarkable shrewdness and mother wit. From having long been there he must have been well known to all who regularly frequented the temple, and to the wider circle of those who came from far to the great yearly gatherings. This man could not see Jesus, but, what was better, Jesus could see him; and we read in the opening of the chapter, “As Jesus passed by, He saw a man which was blind from his birth.” Many other blind men there were in Israel, but Jesus saw this man with a special eye. I think I see the Savior standing still, and looking at him, taking stock of him, listening to his quaint speeches, noting what kind of man he is, and exhibiting special interest in him. This morning there is one in the Tabernacle who cannot see Jesus, for he has no spiritual eyes, but I am convinced that my Master is now looking at him, searching him from head to foot, and reading him with discerning eye. He is considering what He will make of him by and by, for He has the great and gracious intent that He will take this sinner, who is spiritually like the blind beggar, and enlighten him, and give him to behold His glory. I suppose that the blind beggar of the temple hardly valued sight, for he had been blind from his birth. Those who have seen must greatly miss the light of day, but those who have never possessed sight at all can hardly have an idea of what that sense must be, and therefore it cannot be so great a deprivation to them. The person I am searching for at this time has no idea of the joy of true religion, for he has no sense of spiritual life and light; he has never seen as yet, and therefore he does not know his own misery in being blind. He has been blind from birth, and in all probability he is content to be so, for he does not know the delight which waits upon heaven-illuminated eye. Spiritual things to him are an unknown region, of which he has no conception. He is here at this time, yet he is not looking for salvation, nor desiring it, but Jesus knows the value of sight, He knows the glories which heavenly light would bring home to the mind, and He will not be narrowed in His action by human ignorance, but will dispense His bounty according to His own mind, which is large as the boundless sea.

This beggar did not pray for sight, at least, it is not recorded that he did so. He was a beggar, it was his trade to beg, but among all his petitions he did not ask for sight. Yet Jesus gave him sight. Know you not that glorious declaration of free grace, “I am found of them that sought me not”? Is it not a wonderful thing that Jesus does often come to those who sought not for Him? He comes all of a sudden to them in the sovereignty of His infinite compassion, and before they have begun to pray for the blessing, He has bestowed it upon them. His free love precedes their desires for it. When they wake up to a consciousness of the value of salvation they find themselves in possession of it, and so their first prayers are

mingled with praises. I am persuaded that there are some before me now who are like the man born blind; they do not know what they want, they are not yet aware of the value of the blessing, and consequently they have not sought it, but today they are going to receive it.

There was this circumstance in favor of the blind beggar that he was in the way where Jesus was likely to go, for he was at the temple gate. My friend, you too are on hopeful ground at this time, for you are found in the place where my Lord has often been, and where He is very likely to come again. We have prayed Him into this house hundreds of times, and we have done so this morning. He has been glorified in this Tabernacle, and His friends have so welcomed Him, that here He delights to come. Oh that, as Jesus passes by, He may stand still, and look on you with eyes of infinite mercy!

What was our Lord doing? Truth to tell, He was under a divine compulsion; He said, "I must work the works of Him that sent Me." He was looking out for material to work upon—material in which the works of God should be made manifest. Here was the very man, prepared for Christ as clay is prepared for the modeler. Let him receive his sight, and all Jerusalem would see the work of the Lord, and even dwellers in far-off lands would hear of it. This blind beggar was the very person the Savior was looking for. My Master walks up and down these aisles, and He finds a great many who can see, or who think they can. These He passes by, for "the whole need not a physician." But as He goes along He comes at last to a poor dark creature, hopelessly, helplessly blind from his birth, and He stops and says, "This is the man; there is room for a miracle here." It is even so, O Lord. In those empty sockets, or in those withered eyeballs, there is space for healing power to exhibit itself; in that hard heart and stubborn will there is room for renewing grace. The necessities of the sinner are the opportunities of the Savior, and you, poor, guilty, lost, and ruined sinner, you are the raw material for Christ's grace to work upon; you are the very man His forgiving love is looking for.

You who cannot see spiritual things, you who scarcely know what heavenly sight can mean, and hardly have a desire to know, you are the very person in whom there is elbow room for omnipotent grace, space and scope for the matchless skill of our Savior's love. My Lord stops and looks at you. "This will do," He says, "This is the kind of man I want; here I can work out My mission and life-purpose. I am the light of the world, and with this darkness I will deal, removing it at once." O Lord Jesus, You are in the highest heaven now, and yet You hear Your servants' prayers from this poor earth. Come into this tabernacle, and repeat the wonders of Your love! We do not ask You to open the natural eyes of the blind, but we ask You to give spiritual sight to the inly blind, understanding to the erring, and salvation to the lost. Prove Yourself to be the Son of the Highest by saying, "Let there be light." These poor blind ones do not pray to You, but *we* ask grace for them, and surely Your own heart prompts You to answer us. Come at this hour and bless them, to the praise of the glory of Your grace!

This case of the blind beggar is eminently instructive; and therefore, let us get at it at once, in the hope that while we are considering the model case, we may see it repeated in spiritual form in our midst. Holy Spirit, bless our discourse to that end.

I. First, in this man's healing, and in the salvation of every chosen soul, we shall see THE GREAT HEALER CONSPICUOUS. If any one among us shall ever be saved, the Savior will be made great thereby. If we are pardoned we shall not be honored by the forgiveness, but the royal hand which signed and sealed the pardon shall be greatly extolled. If our eyes are opened, we shall not be made famous for sight, but He that opened our eyes will be made illustrious by the cure. It was thus in this case, and rightly so.

To begin with, in this man's mind, as soon as ever he received sight, "*a man that was named Jesus*" came to the forefront. Jesus was to him the most important person in existence. All that he knew of Him at first was, that He was a man that was named Jesus, and under that character Jesus filled the whole horizon of his vision. He was more to him than those learned Pharisees, or than all his neighbors put together. Jesus was exceeding great, for He had opened his eyes. By and by, fixing his mind upon that figure, he saw more in it, and he declared, "He is a prophet." He boldly said this when he was running great risks by doing so. To their faces he told the carping Pharisees "He is a prophet." A little further on he came to this, that he believed Him to be the Son of God, and worshipped Him. Now, my dear friend, if you are saved by Jesus, your star must set, but the star of Jesus must rise and increase in brilliance till it becomes no more a star, but a sun, making your day, and flooding your whole soul with light. If we are saved, Christ Jesus must and will have the glory of it. None on earth or in heaven can rival Jesus in the esteem of souls brought from darkness to light; He is everybody to them. Do you dislike this? Do you

want a share of the spoils, a fragment of the glory? Go your way and be blind, for your condition can never be altered while you refuse to honor the Savior. He that opens a man's eyes deserves grateful praises forevermore.

After this man had received sight *his testimony was all of Jesus*. It was Jesus that spat, it was Jesus that made the clay, it was Jesus that anointed his eyes. So will it be in your mind with the gospel of your salvation; it will be "Jesus only." It is Jesus who became the surety of the covenant, Jesus who became the atoning sacrifice. Jesus is the Priest, the Interposer, the Mediator, and the Redeemer. We know Jesus as Alpha, and Jesus as Omega. He is the first, and He is the last. In your salvation there will be no mistake about it, and no mixture in it; you will have nothing to say about man, or man's merit, or man's will, but on the head which once was wounded with the thorns, you will put all your crowns. Jesus did it, did it all, and He must be praised.

It is to be noted that *the authority of Jesus issued the saving command*. "Go, wash." These were not the words of Peter, or James, or John, but the words of Jesus, and therefore the man obeyed them. The gospel message, "Believe and live," is not obeyed till you perceive that it is proclaimed by the supreme authority of King Jesus, the Savior. O sirs, He that bids you believe is that same Lord who can and will give you healing through your obedience to His command. Trust because He bids you. The warrant of the gospel is the authority of Christ. Obey His command, and you have obtained His salvation. The success of the gospel command is produced by Him that spoke it. It is effectual because it comes forth from His mouth. "Where the word of a king is, there is power," and the gospel is the word of the great King, and therefore those who listen to it find it to be the power of God unto salvation.

This man, when he had received sight, attributed it most distinctly and undividedly to Jesus. He said expressly, "He has opened my eyes." Whenever he delivered his testimony, whether to his neighbors or to the Pharisees, there was no uncertain sound about it; he had been enlightened by Jesus, and by Jesus alone, and to Him he gave all the glory, and he was right in doing so.

Come, then, lend me your ears. Oh, you who would find light this morning, give me your thoughts at this moment! Endeavor to realize that Jesus Christ is a living and acting person. He is not dead; He has risen long ago. Being alive, and exalted to the highest heavens, He is clothed with infinite power and majesty, and is mighty to save. In a spiritual way, He is among us still, working according to His gracious nature. To us He is not an absent Christ, nor a sleeping Christ, but He is doing still what He did when He was on earth, only He now works in the spiritual as once He worked in the physical world. He is now present to save, present to open the eyes of the spiritually blind, present to bless you to whom I speak.

Understand that He is looking upon you at this moment. Standing in front of you, His shadow is now falling upon you. He is considering your case. Are you praying? He is hearing. Has it scarcely got so far as a prayer? Is it but a desire? He is reading that desire; as it passes like a shadow across the camera of your soul He is thinking upon you. At this moment He is able to say the word that shall take the film from your eyes, and let in the everlasting light of grace. Do you believe this? If so, then cry to Him—"Lord, grant me to receive my sight." He will hear you. Perhaps while I am speaking He will send the light. To your intense delight you shall find yourself in a new world. Escaping from darkness, you shall enter into His marvelous light.

Realize, further, that the great change that you need in order to salvation is beyond all mortal power. You cannot effect it yourself, nor can all "the help of men and angels joined" effect it for you. It is even beyond your own conception. As a carnal man, you do not know what spiritual things are, and you cannot fashion an idea of them. A dead man cannot know what life is. Truly, if he could live again, he would have some knowledge of life derived from his former life, but as to you, it would be all novel and strange, for you have never lived unto God. You cannot conceive what heavenly sight is, for you were born blind. May the Lord do a new thing in you at this moment, and bring you into a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness!

Remember that you must have this miracle worked upon you. If the blind man had remained blind, he might have continued a tolerably happy beggar. He seems to have had very considerable mental resources, and he might have made his way in the world as well as others of the begging confraternity. But *you* cannot be happy or safe unless the Lord Jesus opens your eyes. There remains for you nothing but the blackness of darkness forever, unless light from heaven visits you. You must have Christ, or die. Here is the blessedness of it, that at this moment He is still in the midst of us, able to save to the utter-

most, and willing now to repeat the miracles of His mercy to those who will trust in Him to do so. I think I can almost hear the prayer struggling in your bosom. Silent, and unclothed in words, it sits on your lips. Let it speak. Say, "Lord, open my eyes this day." He will do it! Blessed be His name! He has come on purpose to open the eyes of the blind.

II. Having spoken upon the great Healer, as He stands conspicuous in the miracle, I would now conduct your thoughts, in the second place, to THE SPECIAL MEANS OBSERVABLE in the miracle. Jesus could have healed this man without means, or He could have healed Him by other means, but He chose to work the cure in a manner which to all ages will remain a grand sermon, an instructive parable of grace. He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. This is a picture of the gospel.

It meets with many modern criticisms. In the first place, the mode of cure *seems very eccentric*. Spat and made clay with the spittle and the dust! Very singular! Very odd! Thus odd and singular is the gospel in the judgment of the worldly-wise. "Why," says one, "it seems such a strange thing that we are to be saved by believing." Men think it so odd that fifty other ways are invented straightway! Though the new methods are not one of them worth describing, yet everybody seems to think that the old-fashioned way of "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" might have been greatly improved upon. The way of justification by faith is peculiarly open to criticism, and is about the last that this wise world would have selected. Yet, eccentric as it may seem for Christ to heal with spittle and dust, it was the best and wisest way for His purpose. Suppose instead thereof He had put His hands into His pocket and had taken out a gold or ivory box, and out of this box He had taken a little crystal bottle? Suppose He had taken out the stopper, and then had poured a drop on each of those blind eyes, and they had been opened, what would have been the result? Everybody would have said, "What a wonderful medicine! I wonder what it was! How was it compounded? Who wrote the prescription? Perhaps He found the charm in the writings of Solomon, and so He learned to distil the matchless drops." Thus you see the attention would have been fixed on the means used, and the cure would have been ascribed to the medicine rather than to God. Our Savior used no such rare oils or choice spirits, but simply spat and made clay of the spittle, for He knew that nobody would say, "The spittle did it," or "It was the clay that did it." No, if our Lord seems to be eccentric in the choice of means, yet is He eminently prudent. The gospel of our Lord Jesus—and there is but one—is the wisdom of God, however singular it may seem in the judgment of the worldly wise. It may be thought strange, but it is the sum of all wisdom, and those who try it find it to be so. It would be impossible to improve upon it. Its adaptation to man's case is marvelous; its suitability to its design is matchless. It blesses man, while it gives all glory to God. No one makes the gospel a rival to Christ, but in every case by the gospel the power which blesses men is manifested as the power of God.

In the next place, the means may appear to some *offensive to the taste*. Oh, I think I see some of the fine gentry! How they turn up their noses as they read, "He spat"! "He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle"! It turns the stomachs of those delicate ones! So is it with the gospel. The Agags who go delicately do not like it. How the men of "culture" sneer at the gospel for which our fathers died! Hear how they decry the ever-blessed word of our salvation. They say that it is only fit for old women and idiots, and such fossils of the past ages as the preacher who is now addressing you. We are all fools except these men of progress, and our gospel is disgusting to them. Yes, but stop a minute, and disgust may cease. In the miracle before us, the means made use of was spit; but from whose mouth? It was the mouth of Jesus, which is most sweet. No fragrant perfume, made of the rarest spices, can ever equal the spittle of that divine mouth of His! Clay! What if it is clay? Clay made by the spittle of the mouth of the Son of God is more precious than "the terrible crystal," or the rarest powders of the merchant. Thus is it with my Master's gospel; it is offensive to those who are proud of themselves; it is offensive to carnal reason, to the idiotic self-complacency of those who, considering themselves to be wise, have become otherwise, but to you that believe He is precious; how precious no tongue can tell—

*"What if we trace the globe around,
And search from Britain to Japan,
There shall be no religion found
So just to God, so safe for man."*

The gospel is still to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness, but unto us who are saved it is "Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

It is further objected that the Lord healed this man in such a *commonplace* way! To spit and make clay of the spittle, why, anybody could do that! Why not have used an imposing ceremonial? Why not practice an eclectic method? If it had been one of the doctors of the age, he would have made a great performance of it. His prescription would have been a treat for learned men. Did you ever read Culpeper's "Herbal"? I hope you have never taken any of the medicine which that learned herbalist prescribes. In one mess you will find a dozen articles, each one of them monstrous, and in many a prescription you will find a score or more of herbs most curiously compounded. Such were the prescriptions of still earlier times. If they did no good, they did at least bewilder the patient. And now today what is the new gospel that is proposed to us? It is the gospel of "culture." Culture! This, of course, is the monopoly of our superiors. It is only to be enjoyed by very refined persons, who have been to college, and who carry inside of them a whole university, library and all. The gospel, which is made to be plain enough for way-faring men, is for that reason despised. That Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners is too commonplace a teaching. That He bore our sins in His own body on the tree is rejected as an outrageous dogma, unfit for this intelligent age! Oh yes, we know the men and their contemptuous leer. Yet commonplace as our Lord's medicine was, it was unique. All the philosophers of Greece, and all the wise and rich men of Rome, could not have compounded another dram of this healing application. Only the Christ possessed that matchless spit; only His fingers could make that special clay. Even thus, if the gospel should seem commonplace, it is to be remembered that there is not another like it! Tell me, you that are wise, can you find anything that will bear comparison with it? Christ in the sinner's stead, made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him; can you match this? Jesus redeeming His people from the slavery of sin; you may call it a mercantile atonement, if you please, and grow black in the face in your rage at the substitutionary sacrifice, but you cannot equal it. The more abundant your ridicule of the gospel, the more shall we cling to it, and the better shall we love it, for the very spittle of Christ's mouth is dearer to us than the deepest thoughts of your most profound philosophers.

I think I hear another objector say that the remedy was *quite inadequate*. Clay made out of spittle would be positively inert, and could exercise no healing power upon a blind eye. Just so, we are prepared to hear all this. The clay alone has no efficacy, but when Jesus uses it, it will answer His purpose. The man, after he had washed the clay into the pool, came seeing. The gospel may appear as if it could not renew the heart and save from evil. To believe in the Lord Jesus Christ seems an unlikely means of producing holiness. Men ask, "What can evangelical preaching do to put down sin?" We point to those who were once dead in sin, who are made alive by faith, and thus we prove the efficacy of the gospel by facts. "Oh," they say, "can faith transform the character? Can belief subdue the will? Can trust conduct the mind to a high and elevated life?" It does so, and though in theory it appears inadequate, yet as a matter of fact it has made men into new creatures, and has turned sinners into saints.

Another wise gentleman judges that clay upon the eyes would even be *injurious*. "To stick clay over a man's eyes would not make him see, it would add another impediment to the light." So have I even heard it said, that to preach salvation by faith is against good morals, and may even encourage men in evil. Blind bats as they are, can they not see, that the case is the very reverse? How frequently by the gospel are harlots made chaste, thieves made honest, drunks made sober! By this very gospel of faith which they say is against good morals the best of morals are produced. Why, in the next breath they denounce believers as Puritans, too precise and religious by half. Nothing creates so many good works as that gospel which tells us that salvation is not of works, but of the grace of God.

Another objector declares that our Lord's way of cure was *opposed to the law*. Here is this "man named Jesus" actually making clay or brick-earth on the Sabbath. Was not this a shocking infringement of the law? It is insinuated that our gospel of faith in Jesus makes men think lightly of the law. We preach against the idea of merit, and we say that good works cannot save men, and therefore we are charged with lowering the dignity of the law. This is not true, for our gospel establishes the law and fosters true obedience. When the Savior said, "Go, wash," and the blind man went and washed, the Lord Jesus had taught him obedience, even the best kind of it—namely, the obedience of faith. Even so, though we are apparently in conflict with the law when we declare that by the works of the law shall no flesh living be justified, yet we establish the law, for faith brings with it the principle and mainspring of obedience. To trust God is the very essence of obedience. He that believes in Jesus has taken the first step in the great lesson of obeying God in all things. To see how Jesus suffered the law's penalty, and how He honored the law for us, is to see that which makes the law most glorious in our esteem.

So, I would say in leaving this point; do not quibble at the gospel. We sometimes tell servants that it is never wise to quarrel with their bread and butter. I would earnestly say to every anxious spirit: Do not quarrel with the gospel of salvation. If you are in a right state of mind as to your condition, I am sure you will not. When I found the Lord I was driven into such a corner, that whatever salvation might have been, I would have had it on God's terms without a question. If you are the man that I am looking for, if you want to receive spiritual sight, you will make no conditions with Jesus, you will not ask for a perfumed ointment for your eyes, but you will gladly accept an anointing with clay from your Savior's hands. Whatever the Lord prescribes as the way of salvation you will joyfully accept. In that cheerful acceptance lies a great part of the salvation itself, for your will is now at one with God.

Let us pray the Holy Spirit to reveal to our hearts the gospel, and to make us love it, receive it, and prove its power.

III. I would now lead you a step further. THE PLAIN COMMAND IS MOST NOTEWORTHY. Our Lord said to His patient, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam." The man could not see, but he could hear. Salvation comes to us, not by sight of ceremonies, but by hearing the word of God. The ears are the best friends the sinner has remaining to him. It is by Ear-gate that the Prince Immanuel comes riding into Mansoul in triumph. "Hear, and your soul shall live."

The command was *exceedingly specific*—"Go, wash in the pool of Siloam." So is the gospel exceedingly specific—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." It is not: Do this or that work, but believe! It is not: Believe in a priest, or in any human being, but in Jesus. If this man had said, "I will wash in Jordan, for it was there that Naaman lost his leprosy," his washing would have been useless. It was a little, insignificant affair, that pool of Siloam, whose waters flowed softly; why must he go there? He did not ask for reasons, but he at once obeyed, and in obeying he found the blessing. My hearer, you have to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. There are not twenty things to be done, but only this one. The very longest form of the gospel runs thus, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved," the faith is to be openly confessed by obedience to the Lord's prescribed baptism, but the first matter is the faith. "He that believes on Him has everlasting life." This is very specific! You can make no mistake in the matter.

It was also *intensely simple*. "Go, wash in the pool." Go to the pool, and wash the clay into it. Any boy can wash his eyes. The task was simplicity itself. So is the gospel as plain as a walking stick. You have not to perform twenty genuflections or posturings, each one peculiar, nor have you to go to school to learn a dozen languages, each one more difficult than the other. No, the saving deed is one and simple. "Believe and live." Trust, trust Christ; rely upon Him, rest in Him. Accept His work upon the cross as the atonement for your sin, His righteousness as your acceptance before God, His person as the delight of your soul.

But the command was also *distinctly personal*. "Go, wash." He might not send a neighbor or a friend. His parents could not go for him. It would have been idle for him to have said, "I will pray about it." No, he must go, and himself wash in the pool. So, too, the sinner must himself believe in Jesus. Hear me, dear friend; only your own faith will answer the purpose, your own eyes need opening, and therefore you must yourself go and wash in the pool in obedience to Jesus. You must personally believe unto eternal life. You get into the notion, some of you, that you may sit still and hope that God will save you. I have no authority to encourage you in such a rebellious inactivity. Jesus bids you go and wash and how dare you sit still? When the father comes to receive his prodigal child he finds him on the road. He was yet a great way off when his father saw him, but his face was turned in the right direction, and he was making the best of his way to the father's house. He says to you, "Awake, you that sleep, and arise from the dead and Christ shall give you light." Up with you, Man! Up with you! The pool of Siloam will not come to you, you must go to it. The waters will not leap out of their bed and wash your eyes, but you must stoop to them, and wash in the pool until the clay is gone and you see. It is a very personal direction; mind that you treat it so.

It was a direction which *involved obedience to Christ*. Why must I go there, and wash there? Because He tells you. If you want Jesus to save you, you must do as He bids you. You must take Jesus to be your Lord if you take Him to be your Savior. Dear heart, yield to Jesus Christ this morning. Never servant had such a Master. You may well bow down and kiss those dear feet which were nailed to the cross for you. Yield yourselves to the rule of Jesus at once. The act of faith is the more acceptable because it is the heart's obedience to Jesus. Submit to Him by faith, I beseech you.

The command was for the time present. Jesus did not say, “Go, wash in the pool tomorrow, or in a month’s time.” If the beggar had been blind inwardly as well as outwardly, he might have said, “My blindness brings me in money. I will make a little more as a blind beggar, and then I will have my eyes opened.” He valued sight too much to delay. Had he delayed, he would have remained blind till Doomsday! If any of you think it would be inconvenient to be converted at once, I have no hope of you. I can preach to you no salvation but a present one. He, who will not be saved today, will not be likely to be saved at all. Go, blind beggar, go and be blind forever unless you will have sight today. It may be “now or never” with you. Today is the day of salvation; tomorrow is but the devil’s net. You will be hopelessly lost if you continue to delay.

The command in the blind man’s case was very noteworthy—“Go, wash,” and so is the spiritual command which is its parallel, “Believe in the Lord Jesus.” O souls, hear the word which bids you trust the Savior. He cries, “Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth.” Oh, may God help you to do so at this very instant! Will you not? Blessed Spirit, lead them to do so, for Jesus’ sake!

IV. I come, in the close of the discourse, to invite you to see THE DELIGHTFUL RESULT CERTIFIED. I think I see this man, attended by his neighbors, going to Siloam. They had seen Jesus place the clay upon the man’s eyes, and they had heard Him say, “Go to Siloam.” They volunteer to go, and act as guides to the blind. Curiosity inspires them. He reaches the pool. He goes down the steps. He is close to the water. He stoops his head. He washes his eyes. What will come of it? The clay is gone, but what else has happened? Suddenly the man lifts up his face and cries, “I see! I see!” What a shout went up from them all. “What a wonder! What a marvel! Hosanna! Blessed be God!” The man cries, “It is true, I have washed, and I can see!”

This man could see at once. He washed, and his blindness was gone. Eternal life is received in a moment. It does not take the tick of a clock to justify a sinner. O soul, the moment you believe, you have passed from death to life. Quick as a flash of lightning the effectual change is worked, the eternal life enters and casts out death. Oh, that the Lord would work salvation now! This man could see at once. We read of another blind man that he first saw men as trees walking, and only after a time saw every man clearly, but this man saw clearly at once. Oh that you who hear me this day would believe, and live at once!

This man knew that he could see. He had no question about that, for he said, “One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.” Possibly some of you have been decent people all your lives, and yet you do not know whether you are saved or not. This is poor religion. Cold comfort! Saved, and not know it! Surely it must be as lean a salvation as that man’s breakfast when he did not know whether he had eaten it or not. The salvation which comes of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is conscious salvation. Your eyes shall be so opened that you shall no longer question whether you can see. He could see, and he knew that he could see. Oh, that you would believe in Jesus, and know that you have believed and are saved! Oh, that you might get into a new world, and enter upon a new state of things altogether! May that, which was totally unknown to you before, be made known to you at this hour by Almighty grace.

And other people perceived that he could see. They could not make it out. Some said, “This is he,” but others would only say, “It is like him.” A man with opened eyes is very different from the same man when he is blind. If we were to take any friend we know who has no eyes, and suddenly eyes were to be placed in his countenance, we should probably find his expression so altered that we should hardly think him the same person, and therefore the cautious neighbors only said, “He is like him.” Yet they were all of them sure he could see. None of the Pharisees said to him, “Are you sure you can see?” Those twinkling eyes of his, so full of fun and wit, and sarcasm, were proofs most plain that he could see. Ah! Your friends at home will know that you are converted if it is really so; they will hardly need telling, they will find it out. The very way you eat your dinner will show it. It will! You eat it with gratitude, and seek a blessing on it. The way you will go to bed will show it. I remember a poor man who was converted, but he was dreadfully afraid of his wife—not the only man in the world that is in that fear—and therefore he was fearful that she would ridicule him if he knelt to pray. He crept upstairs in his stockings that he might not be heard, but might have a few minutes’ prayer before she knew he was there. His scheme broke down. His wife soon found him out. Genuine conversion is no more to be hidden than a candle in a dark room. You cannot hide a cough. If a man has a cough, he must cough, and if a man has grace in his heart, he will show grace in his life. Why should we wish to hide it? Oh, may the Lord give you such an eye-opening this day that friends and relatives shall know that your eyes have been opened!

Observe that the restored one *never lost his sight again*. This man did not become blind again. Christ's cures are not temporary. I have heard of many cases of late of people who have been exceedingly happy because they fancied that they were perfectly restored. The cure lasted a week, and then they were as bad as ever. Fancy can do great things for a season, but Christ's cures last forever. Never an eye that Christ opened ever went blind again. We believe in being born again, but not in becoming unborn. I know that whatsoever the Lord does shall be forever. O my friends, I have nothing to preach but eternal salvation! Come to Christ, and He will work in you an effectual cure. Trust Him wholly, for in Him there is everlasting life.

This man, when he received sight, *was willing to lose everything in consequence*. The Jews cast him out of the synagogue, but when Jesus found him the man did not fret about the Jews. I think I can see his face when Jesus found him, how happy he was as he worshipped his benefactor! "Poor soul, poor soul, you have been cast out of the synagogue!" "Oh," he says, "don't pity me. They may cast me out of fifty synagogues now that Christ has found me. What care I for synagogues now that I have found the Messiah? When I was in the synagogue I was a blind man, and now I am out of the synagogue, but I have my sight." When you become a Christian the world will hate you and revile you, but what of that? Some will have no more to do with you. This may be the best turn they can do you. We had a lady of title in our membership once, and a very gracious sister she was. I had some little fear about her at first, lest the great ones should draw her away from the truth. Soon after her baptism, she remarked that a certain noble family had given her the cold shoulder, and others who were very intimate had ceased to call. She took it as a matter of course, and only remarked that it made her own course all the more easy, for she had not now the pain of hearing their ungodly conversation, or even the responsibility of severing the connection. The world has done its best for the child of God when it has cast him out. Its excommunications are better than its communications. The outside of the world's house is the safest side of it for us. That we love the brethren, and that the world hates us, are two good evidences of grace for which a man may be grateful. "Let us go forth unto Christ outside the camp, bearing His reproach."

What a wonderful thing the Lord Jesus had done for this man, and what a wonderful thing He is prepared to do for all who trust Him! It had been a work of creation. The man's eyes were no eyes, Jesus created sight in them. To heal a limb is one thing, but to make an eye, or to enable that which was only the mere fashion of an eye to become an organ of perception, is a greater thing by far. To save a soul is a work of creation. We are created anew in Christ Jesus. It was also a work of resurrection. Those eyes had been dead, and now the Lord Jesus raised them from the dead. The Lord God Almighty can work creation at this moment, He can produce resurrection this day, and why should He not? This day we commemorate both of these divine works. This first day of the week was the beginning of the creation of God. It is also the day in which our Lord rose from the dead, as the first fruits of them that slept. This Lord's Day commemorates the beginning of creation and of resurrection. Let us pray the Almighty Lord to manifest among us the works of God this day. O Lord, regenerate, illuminate, pardon, and save those who are here present, and thus glorify Your Son! Amen, and amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—JOHN 9.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—916, 502, 505.

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